231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebat).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [42] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 ● 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable/minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

231 1587 months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more than on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everybne's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" säwä mätän därrässä (lit. he.

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("sȳet") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmä hawwn" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 585 A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "qurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "demoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by"contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Qurban" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptized, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nagast" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
602 peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nagast" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

583 184 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official. After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 656 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

[584]

178 871 581 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (macha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a quarrel. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]

"Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kabetosh bakebte") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chintz cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhara are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semanya" marriage, once these nego-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER V

SOME OF THEIR HABITS & CUSTOMS—(*continued*)

As the people are Christians they are of course monogamists, but though they have only one wife at a time, they often have, unfortunately for the race, many wives one after the other, and as a natural corollary the women have a series of husbands. This is due to their appallingly lax marriage laws and to the ridiculous facilities for divorce, advantages which do not apply to the Gallas, who "enjoy" two or three or more wives at a time, but then they are not Christians.

Marriage amongst the Abyssinians exists in three forms. Firstly, the man selects a bride, and without any form of ceremony they live together, he supplying her with small amounts of money in addition to a home and the necessaries of life, and when either of them so desires they come to a mutual agreement and separate as easily as they united.

Secondly, there is the civil marriage. In this case there is a contract made before the *Shum* (or "Mayor") when the properties of the would-be bride and bridegroom are specified, and an arrangement is made as to division in case of divorce, though usually they agree to divide things equally. In the event of divorce this division is carried out to the letter, and should there, for example, be amongst other things only one cooking pot, this is halved. When a woman has been "married"

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 586 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

562 Women, some of whom are attractive and even pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

562 586 Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

562 462 357 In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest—and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post-marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among